

HASHING IT OUT



ILLUSTRATION BY MAKAYLA POLAK EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Council approves contract for road fixtures

HANNAH CLAYWELL
News Reporter | @Hannah_9504

Following a tour of the new Water Pilot Treatment Plant, City Council discussed and approved multiple contracts for improvements around town.

During the meeting, the Council discussed a contract with Applied Pavement Technology, Inc., a contract with SK Design Group, Inc. and a contract with Schindler Elevator Corporation to replace the elevator jack at the Mozingo Lake Recreation Park Event Center. Council also discussed executing Amendment 1 to come to an agreement with HDR Engineering, Inc.

Council discussed a contract with Applied Pavement Technology, Inc. to make a citywide pavement assessment and management plan. This contract is supposed to help assess and improve the streets in Maryville. Public Works Director Matthew Smith explained the details to the Council.

“The city owns and maintains approximately 250 miles of roadway,” Smith said.

There were four proposals received and analyzed by a committee then June 16 there was a letter of intent issued to Applied Pavement Technology, Inc. The cost is around \$166,500.

There will be a car with the necessary equipment to access the roads. There will be a collection of data then there will be an analysis to find the priority roads for improvement.

Mayor Tye Parsons said he supported the contract and thought this was a good plan to improve the roads in Maryville. City Manager Greg McDanel said he also thought this was a good plan.

In the spirit of talking about improvements being made to Maryville, McDanel gave an update on South Main Street construction.

SEE COUNCIL | A4

Sunrise Dispensary talks future recreational sales

JAKOB PRATER
News Editor | @JakobLPraeter

Missouri will become the 21st state to legalize recreational marijuana after voters passed the proposed Amendment 3 on election night Nov. 8. Amendment 3 not only legalizes recreational cannabis to adults over 21, but it also expands medicinal marijuana patient’s rights. There are currently over 200 marijuana dispensaries in Missouri, and Maryville has one that may be the most lucrative.

According to Isaiah Weathers, a patient consultant at Sunrise Dispensary in Maryville, Sunrise expects its Maryville location may be the busiest dispensary in the state of Missouri. Weathers said this could be a combination of the culture of Maryville and the University, as well as its proximity to the borders of Iowa, Nebraska and Kansas.

“We already have pretty good medical marijuana based out here in Maryville, so we have a pretty

good marijuana culture here in Maryville for the most part,” Weathers said.

Sunrise Dispensaries has locations across Missouri, including Kansas City, St. Louis, Macon, Clinton and Maryville — which opened up last February. It offers a wide variety of cannabis products, including buds, pens, wax, edibles and even lotion. Weathers said Sunrise is ‘playing it by ear’ when it comes to legalization but will plan on selling cannabis products recreationally.

Amendment 3 does not go into effect until Dec. 8, and it will be a little longer than that before dispensaries can begin recreational sale of cannabis products. Dispensaries can get their recreational licenses after Dec. 8 and at the earliest will be able to sell to citizens by Feb. 6. Weathers said Sunrise has planned for this and expects to open its doors to Maryville on that date.

SEE SUNRISE | A4



TYSON ELLIOTT PHOTOGRAPHER
Vito Palmietto co-leads a tour for council members around the Water Pilot Treatment Plant located on the outskirts of Maryville. The tour explained how the operation works and let council members see the plant.

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RENEE HASKELL PHOTOGRAPHER
Leet Center student worker Devin Isaacson sits with three of the center’s infants during lunch time, helping feed them and encouraging self-feeding. The Leet Center provides care for a total of 22 children, ranging from two months to three years old and currently employs 42 student workers.

Leet Center reflects on first year

KENNEDY KALDOVA
News Reporter | @Kennedy_Kalvoda

The Phyllis and Richard Leet Center, the preschool attached to the Horace Mann Laboratory School, has undergone big changes since it opened over a year ago in July 2021. The childcare center has now renovated two of its preschool rooms and converted them into an infant and toddler daycare area.

The center received a \$1.6 million grant from the Missouri Department of Social Services in 2020. It was one of five higher education institutions in Missouri to receive Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act Child Care Plan funding.

This funding was focused on bettering the quality and availability of child care and early education programs in Missouri. As it was originally only a preschool, the grant went towards converting this area into one that would better suit the needs of infants and toddlers.

The new daycare is accepting a total of 21 children from the ages of six weeks to three years old, eight infants, eight children who are one to two years old and five children who are two to three years old.

Director of the Laboratory School and the Leet Center Laura King said that having this new daycare will be a lot of help to the Maryville community, as there are not many daycare providers in Maryville.

“It’s an area in the Maryville community that’s of great need,” King said. “Having a great high quality area where our practicum students can learn with us and then also be able to help the community was a big push in this.”

King also said having an area like the Leet Center on campus makes it much easier for early education students who are in the process of doing their observations, practicums or student teaching to accomplish those degree requirements.

“It gives them a very safe place close to campus,” King said. “The great thing about the way our practicums operate is they’re able to be in the classroom and are able to go right back upstairs and talk very quickly about what they’re learning.”

Northwest senior early education major Nicole David is a student employee at the center. She said having a center like this right on campus makes it much easier to have in person experience with children.

“As an education major I think it’s so beneficial because you get to come down here and get experience with the students which in some schools you don’t get to do,” David said.

Lead teacher of the Leet Center Michelle Vaught said something that makes the infant and toddler area in the center unique from other traditional daycares is that it accom-

modates multiple age levels, and it writes goals for each individual child based on developmental milestones.

“We hope that we can not just provide care but provide quality care,” Vaught said. “We are not just your typical daycare. We put an educational and developmental twist on childcare.”

David said of the main reasons she decided to work at the center is that as an early education major, working at a childcare facility like the Leet Center while in college looks good on a resume.

“I’ve always loved kids since I was little,” David said. “I’ve always wanted to work at a daycare, I’ve just never gotten the opportunity to, so this was the perfect job for me.”

Vaught said that at the daycare, they start practicing social, educational and developmental skills with their youngest children right when they start coming to the center. She said even with their infants they are doing activities to help with educational development such as finger plays and reading books.

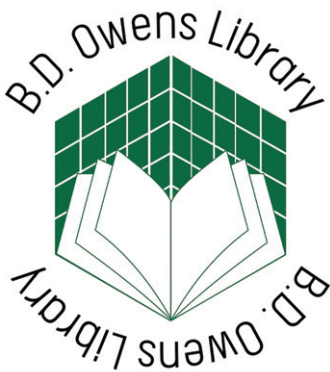
“Even with our infants, we’re providing opportunities for them to socialize and understand,” Vaught said. “We’re already helping them with that emotional development from those early stages, and we’re also working on educational development. We really want to provide those opportunities to learn and develop and grow through play.”

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NATHAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER Northwest agricultural science major Josie Sackett and animal science and pre-vet major Haylee Payne stand next to Ray Ashbaugh beside a dairy cow free stall at Northwest's R.T Wright Farm. Ashbaugh is a herdsman at the R.T Wright Farm and is approaching his 40th year working at the University next August.



NATHAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER Ray Ashbaugh talks in an interview Nov. 11 in his office at R.T Wright Farm. Ashbaugh started his farming career the summer after his freshman year of college in Weston, Missouri, where he first found a strong connection to farm animals and dairy cows.

Ashbaugh reflects on 40 years of dairy farming

KIERSTEN HELM
Missourian Reporter | @TheMissourian

When he was 5 years old, a new love had captured the heart of a Maryville native cattle. Unknown to him at the time, he would eventually pursue a career at Northwest as the dairy herdsman at the R.T Wright Farm. Raymond Ashbaugh is celebrating his 40th anniversary at this farm.

Ashbaugh began his dairy journey at a farm in Weston, Missouri, during summer break after his freshman year of college. He connected with the cattle in a way that only a 'cow whisperer' could. He found his passion, and his love grew for this animal. When he came back to Northwest, he was hoping to apply for the campus farm as a student employee when a once in a lifetime opportunity opened as the assistant dairy herdsman.

"All I can say is 40 years have gone by fast. It's a long time for this business just because there's so much hard work. Most people don't put that many years in, maybe half at the most," Ashbaugh said.

Ashbaugh continued to take classes while working 10 hours a day, seven days a week starting at 4:30 a.m. The requirements for this job were intense but for Ashbaugh, he was doing what he loves.

"I can be a farmer and get to make sure I get my check every month," Ashbaugh said.

Farming is an industry full of gambles and inconsistency. However, for Ashbaugh, working for the University comes with its ben-

efits as he doesn't have to worry about the typical income stressors that other dairy farmers may experience. This may be the reason the dairy industry has decreased in the amount of diverse farmers and turned into a sector.

In Missouri, there are only 402 family-operated dairy farms left. To put this into perspective, there were 895 in 2014 and 1,796 dairy farms in 2000. In fact, when Ashbaugh went to the Dairy Farmers of America's Central Area Council meeting in Northwest Missouri, he saw four families who were in attendance and the rest of attendees were employees of DFA.

At this meeting, Northwest was awarded the 2022 Quality Award for hard work, attention to detail and commitment to producing a quality product. This award is a positive reflection of the impact Ashbaugh has had on the R.T. Wright Farm as the dairy herdsman.

"I found out through one of the milk board members on the state milk board said there are less than 400 Grade A Dairies in the state of Missouri. How? The only reason I can come up with is it costs so much to start," Ashbaugh said. The average farmer is 59 years old now, and it's just hard work."

There has been turnover throughout his tenure with students, faculty and staff but what has stayed consistent is the work that needs to be done. Ashbaugh has witnessed an endless amount of stories that range from racoons in the ceiling, finding a woman lying by the cows randomly one morning and even

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-RAYMOND ASHBAUGH

scaring off college boys who thought cow tipping was 'cool.'

"I could open the door to let them out (cattle) and pull the rope and there would be baby coons up in the roof, looking down," Ashbaugh said. "I'd be sitting in my office and could hear scratching." He remembers this one time when a raccoon's paw was poking out around the ceiling lights looking for something to eat.

One particular morning, the rain had moved its way into Maryville back in the 1980s which meant that Ashbaugh had to wear a rain jacket while milking the cows due to the consistent leak in the dairy barn. He had to do this every time it rained and when he brought it up to the people above him, they said it cost too much, and they were waiting until they could build a new dairy barn.

"We finally got after them enough that they fixed the roof and then it was like 18 years

later, they finally built a new dairy," Ashbaugh said. He said he learned quickly that the wheel to get things done moved rather slowly.

Years later, the dairy barn has moved from east of McKimney on campus to across highway 71, off campus and Ashbaugh has since moved out of the provided housing and bought his own small farm in a town near Maryville.

In order to be a dairy farmer, you must know cows. Ashbaugh has learned to read cows so he can better adapt to their present needs.

"I can go out amongst them and well, I look at 'em and say this one's sick today, this one wasn't feeling good and this one's in heat this morning." It takes a lot of time to learn that," Ashbaugh said. "You have to love cows to understand what's going on."

A while back, there was a set of twins born on the farm that were some of Ashbaughs most interesting Holstein calves. Most of

the time when a heifer has a set of twins, she only cares for one of them, leaving the other to die. In this case, they both flourished.

"When they came into the milking parlor, they were never apart, they would always be together. You could tell they were sisters, they looked alike," Ashbaugh said.

Overall, he has seen 20 generations of dairy cattle. When it comes to retirement, Ashbaugh isn't ready to make that decision.

"I was just thinking about that, there are days and then there are days. But yeah, I see it coming. Don't know when but everybody faces it," Ashbaugh said. "But then, you know, I'm not looking forward to retiring, but it's just one of the steps everybody has to take."

One reason Ashbaugh isn't ready to say goodbye is because of all the advancements that may be a reality on this University farm. There have been talks of creating a micro-dairy at the Agricultural Learning Center as well as foreign visitors from Switzerland, Norway and other European countries who have recently toured the farm.

"They're also talking about the possibility of working with a company from Israel that makes these robotic milkers," Ashbaugh said. "That would be very cool."

Once he does retire, he has tossed around the idea of writing a book to embrace his experiences. When he mentioned being here for 40 years, Ashbaugh put his hands in the air and made a whooshing noise because time goes by so fast.

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NATHAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER

The Elks Lodge stands on North Main Street next to Maryville Travel Agency. The Elks Lodge has been in Maryville for over 100 years. It’s closing its current building on North Main Street to open a new building in March 2023 after its current building contract expires in February 2023.

Elks Lodge moves to new location

ALYNA THIBAUT
News Reporter | @TheMissouian

Maryville’s lodge stands at North Main Street but will be saying goodbye to its current location in February 2023.

The Elks Lodge will not be fully closing its doors, but opening new ones. It is moving forward to better with a new location. Two years ago, it bought the old Public Safety building and started tearing up the inside to build its new home for its members.

James Richardson is the exalted ruler of the lodge. He is responsible for all operations, programs, social quarter activities of the lodge and presides over each lodge session.

The two-story building doesn’t provide the best access for its older members who are unable to make it up and down

the stairs safely.

Private fraternal organization Elks Lodge has been in Maryville for over 100 years. The Elks was founded in 1868 in New York City as a social club for minstrel show performers called “Jolly Corks.”

“(We) decided to move into a more friendly environment, somewhere our old members don’t have to have steps. We do have an older group of members that have a hard time getting up and down the steps,” Richardson said. “Our building was built in 1905 and has served its purpose and needs a lot of work.”

According to the Elks, its purpose is to promote and practice the four cardinal virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of Amer-

ican patriotism and cultivate good fellowship.

Its contract on the building ends in February 2023 and is hoping the new building is done by March 2023 so it can open its doors right back up.

Buying and selling isn’t an easy thing to do, and it is currently still in the process of financial steps. Richardson explains how hard this process is to move locations.

“That was a major process I can’t get into but yes that was a major process. Each step was about a four-month process,” Richardson said.

The Elks Lodge plans to keep moving forward to better our community. It does many things like provide scholarships, deer hide program for veterans, donate money to food pantries and fire stations and much more that benefits the community.

The members have all been informed about the new location.

“The younger members are all happy and some of the older members were upset because we are losing part of our history from one lodge to the other,” Richardson said. “But I mean everything gotta have a little bit of change or it’s going to die.”

They have made lots of functional improvements to the new building. They started the process of remodeling a couple of months after they bought it. They have totally gutted the building, they have plumbing, concrete and most of the walls up.

The Elks Lodge has been a deep part of Maryville’s history and is looking forward to the future with its new location. Members say this is a hard goodbye, but a warm welcome to the newly improved Elks Lodge.

CRIME LOG

for the week of Dec. 1

Northwest Missouri State University Police Department

Nov. 21
There is a closed investigation for a fire alarm in Roberta Hall.

There is a closed investigation for a fire alarm in Martindale Hall.

Nov. 17
There is a closed investigation for trespassing by **Colby Carlson, Wyatt McClure** and **Edwards Richas** in Millikan Hall.

Maryville Department of Public Safety

Nov. 27
A bicycle was recovered on the 100 block of North Main Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for larceny from a motor vehicle on the 900 block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Noah D. Falk**, 32, for driving while suspended and failure to maintain financial responsibility on the 30 block of North Water Street.

There is an ongoing investigation for burglary on the 2000 block of East First Street.

Nov. 26
There is an ongoing investigation for larceny on the 1600 block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Makenzie K. Winstrom**, 24, and **Louis Smith**, 23, for larceny on the 1600 block of South Main Street.

A summons was issued to **Rachel L. Anderson**, 32, for assault on the 200 block of South Main Street.

SUNRISE

CONTINUED FROM A1

“We projected about \$40,000 in (recreational) sales on our first day, and we get that in a single week as of now, so we think it’s gonna get really busy,” Weathers said. “It will open up job opportunities, especially for college candidates. We will be opening up part-time positions, and we are specifically looking for college students.”

Weathers also said that Sunrise is trying to do good in the community to improve its image and is involved in philanthropy projects. Sunrise has participated in local food drives before and even some sponsorships with the Nodaway County Humane Society.

“We do quite a lot of stuff for the community, to make it not seem so illicit, to get rid of the stigma against marijuana and marijuana users. To show that we can help out,” Weathers said.

Weathers said Sunrise is expecting a rise in its Maryville location from younger customers, especially after a couple months and word gets around. It has also expected a large number of customers coming in from bordering states due to Maryville’s close location to Iowa and Nebraska.

“I think we will see a dramatic increase from the bordering states. People coming down here, making large purchases and going back to their state illegally,” Weathers said. “We can’t stop them from doing that because we don’t know they’re doing it, but we do know that’s going to be our customers’ turnout.”

Maryville City Council discussed marijuana laws at their Nov. 28 meeting. According to city manager Greg McDanel, businesses would have to apply for both medical and recreational sales. The original law in Maryville outlawing smoking in public will stay in effect. McDanel also said that the creation and sale of marijuana products will be regulated to licensed dispensaries only.



TYSON ELLIOTT PHOTOGRAPHER

Jeff Harp from The Missouri Intergovernmental Risk Management Association awards a grant to the city of Maryville upwards of \$1,000 on the behalf of MIRMA.

COUNCIL

CONTINUED FROM A1

“The South Main corridor improvement project plan requires repackaging,” McDanel said.

Repacking will reform the South Main project and change it if required.

The Council approved the proposed ordinance for engineering services for Phase II becoming available through a contract with SK Design Group, Inc.

Mozingo Park Director Jordyn Greenhaw then discussed replacing the elevator jack at the event center at Mozingo Lake Recreation Park. The current jack had been fixed for short-term several times before. Greenhaw said replacing the jack would be a long-term solution.

It will cost \$28,009 to replace the jack. The quote was provided in early June, but the price should not ex-

ceed this cost. The Council approved the contract with Schindler Elevator Corporation. The repairs should take approximately three days to complete.

There is a \$3.7 million grant for storm water improvement. The city worked with Northwest to receive the Storm Water Improvement Grant. This will be helping to improve the issues on the Northwest campus and around the community.

McDanel then discussed that businesses will need to obtain new licenses specific to selling recreational marijuana. Since marijuana was included in the original rules about smoking in public it will still be in effect after the Amendment 3 passed. There will still be rules in effect that will control the usage and selling of marijuana.

Water Pilot Treatment Plant

During the tour of the Water Pilot Treatment Plant, there was a short explanation of what the Water Pilot Treatment Plant does and how the operation works. This was so that all of the Council members got a chance to see the plant. The tour happened because of the ordinance to execute Amendment I, which was discussed during the Council meeting.

Amendment I proposed an increased amount of \$44,920, which increases the total contract with HDR Engineering, Inc. to \$760,231. There will be a new site for the Water Pilot Treatment Plant. The Council approved to execute Amendment I.

The Water Pilot Treatment Plant is to insure clean water without any issues such as odors. Successes from the pilot plant will allow a newer facility to be built.

Subsidiary names for rape can't continue



MAKAYLA POLAK
Editor-in-Chief
@ kaypolak

Date rape or acquaintance rape is not just as it sounds, in fact, you could take away the first word in both of them, and it would still have the same meaning. Giving rape a name in front of it is just another attempt to soften the blow of what actually happened — it's rape, no exception.

The relationship between the survivor and the assailant doesn't change the definition of the crime. Whether it's an acquaintance, friend, partner or even a family member, rape is still rape, and there is no reason we should be giving it a subsidiary name.

It doesn't matter if the person has known their assailant for one minute or nine years, if consent was not given, then it is rape.

Giving it another name and calling it date rape is outright incorrect. Unfortunately, it's given its name because if you explain that the victim put themselves in that position, then they can be at blame. It's given this name to make the assailant seem less of a threat. The same goes for acquaintance rape.

When people give rape a subsidiary name, all they are doing is hurting the one person that is already in pain — the survivor. It's belittling to call it anything except rape.

To give you inside to what this feels like, I was raped by someone that I had known for roughly six months at the time. I said no over and over, but he didn't respect it. A person that knew me and who I thought cared about me, took advantage of me.

After something like that happens, all you want is for someone to listen and believe you. Rather all you receive are the dreaded comments of 'but aren't you friends?' or 'I thought you liked him?'

When it happens, all history, respect and trust goes out the door and all that's left are two people — a victim and an assailant. There's no excuses or acceptable reasons as to what caused it to occur.

When a person discredits what happened to you by calling it acquaintance rape, suddenly, you're blaming yourself for what happened to you.

You start thinking that it's your fault, that maybe if you weren't friends with that person, this wouldn't have happened to you. To top it off, you might feel obligated to continue being their friend, pretending that it didn't happen.

Stop calling it date rape or acquaintance rape when in the end, it's just rape. I feel that I've repeated myself far too many times, but still, I feel the repetitive sentences are needed. You may not realize the harm that is being done when you put a label on rape, but I challenge you to sit back, take a minute to think and put the survivor first in your mind.

To report a sexual assault or speak with a sexual assault advocate, call UPD at 660-562-1254. The National Sexual Assault Hotline is 1-800-656-HOPE. For more information on the North Star Advocacy Center, call 660-562-2320. The Toll-Free Crisis Line is 1-866-382-7867.



OUR VIEW:

Students should take time for themselves during break

With finals week upon us, students are now in crunch time. The next week will be spent studying, seeing friends before the break, planning graduation parties or trying to find a job for the next stage of life.

From a student's perspective, we have a long week and a half ahead of us — however, there's a light at the end of the tunnel.

The University gives students and faculty an extended break to take time for themselves. From Dec. 10 through Jan. 11 students are able to focus on anything but school. If able, take the time to do things you enjoy and want to do. The time off is significant, students should push themselves to get the most out of their break.

Whether you spend your time working, applying for jobs or simply enjoying the break for what it is, students should remember winter break doesn't have to be sitting around doing nothing. Although it's a transition between semesters, it's also a time where you can spend doing things you haven't been able to, rather than focusing on classwork.

Long breaks are awkward to plan for. If you account for a week of holiday activities and time spent with family, that still leaves you almost three

weeks of time to fill. Everyone recharges in a different way, so take care of yourself and do what is best for you.

For those graduating in May, this is a much needed break. Planning your future can be stressful and trying to find a job with the degree that you spent the last few years working on isn't easy. On top of that, figuring out where you want to live and looking for a new place to call home can take a toll on you. Having a month free from school will help to figure out the unknowns.

The holidays are expensive. Your bank account will likely take a hit these next few weeks because of the random trips to Starbucks, presents purchased and gas you'll spend driving around because you're bored. If you enjoyed your summer job, this would be the perfect time to earn that money back or get a little spending money by working for a few extra weeks. With holidays being a busy time for everyone, companies are always looking for extra help to take on the season.

There are several sporting events going on during the break as well. On a professional level, the World Cup, NFL, NBA and more are all occurring. The World Cup occurs every four years, the NFL season is get-

ting closer to playoffs and the NBA Christmas games are all big events.

Bearcat Athletics are also going to be busy. Students who are involved in sports during break are not able to go home as long due to practices and games. Supporting them would be a great way to spend an evening. Games are free for students, and it's always fun to cheer on our teams. Sports are a great excuse to gather friends and watch a game together.

During the holidays there is no better time spent than with those closest to you. By watching movies, cooking or any other holiday activity of choice, you are creating memories with them. This is also the perfect time to spend arguing with those same people. The holiday season isn't complete without a game of Monopoly gone wrong or problems in the kitchen that cause a scene. For the majority of students, time with family can be rare. Holidays spent back home allows you to make up for the lost time by spending it with friends and family.

Your winter break can be spent doing many different things. The beauty of it is that it's your break, so enjoy it. The Editorial Board hopes you have the best break possible, and we will see you next year.

YOUR VIEW:

What do you plan on doing over your winter break?



ELIJAH ROBINSON
Sophomore
Mass Media Broadcasting

"Probably spending time with my family and my girlfriend. This break, four of our six siblings are all in the same house."



FAITH ZUMWALT
Junior
Elementary Education

"Working at Walmart back home because that's my job and just sleeping."



MALCOLM ANTHONY
Freshman
Sports Media

"Mostly to relax and play video games, specifically God Of War Ragnarok."

THE STROLLER:

Your Bearcat needs the McRib to stay

It's the most wonderful time of the year, but I'm not talking about Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa or even winter solstice. I'm talking about how a couple of glorious months of the year, us Americans are blessed with the best sandwich to come out of fast food — the McRib.

The McRib returned this year Oct. 31. The next day I called the Maryville McDonald's to confirm if they had the blessing of a sandwich in stock. That's right, I call McDonald's more often than I call my parents. Within minutes I was speeding through the streets to order my first McRib of the season. To sweeten the deal, McDonald's lets you throw in an extra one for only one dollar when you buy a McRib meal. I have gladly purchased one each time I roll into the drive-through, which is more times than I'd like to admit. I'm sure the McRib is made

out of material from a variety of substances, resulting in something that barely qualifies as meat anymore, but I simply don't care. The taste of it is so mesmerizing and euphoric to me that I'm more than willing to put my own best interests aside until I finish my delicious meal.

The warm slab of meat doused in that special sauce, with onions and pickles on top is not only special or unique, it's a priceless gift. It's a good thing that I don't live in a place where the McRib is offered year-round, because if I did, I might have faced the consequences of the afterlives by now. Even though I wish it was a permanent menu item, its seasonal status only makes it more special.

The Stroller has been a tradition since 1918 and does not reflect the views of the Northwest Missourian.

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Winter Break Basketball Schedule

WOMEN'S

Dec. 1 vs. Missouri Southern 5:30 p.m. in Joplin, Missouri
Dec. 3 vs. Pittsburg State 1:30 p.m. in Pittsburg, Kansas
Dec. 10 vs. Nebraska-Kearney 1:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Dec. 11 vs. Fort Hays State 1:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Dec. 13 vs. McKendree 6 p.m. in Lebanon, Illinois
Dec. 17 vs. Emporia 5:30 p.m. in Emporia, Kansas
Dec. 31 vs. Northeastern State 1:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Jan. 2 vs. Rogers State 5:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Jan. 7 vs. Missouri Western 1:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena

WOMEN'S

Dec. 1 vs. Missouri Southern 7:30 p.m. in Joplin, Missouri
Dec. 3 vs. Pittsburg State 3:30 p.m. in Pittsburg, Kansas
Dec. 10 vs. Nebraska-Kearney 3:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Dec. 11 vs. Fort Hays State 3:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Dec. 17 vs. Emporia 7:30 p.m. in Emporia, Kansas
Dec. 28 vs. Clarke 2 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Dec. 31 vs. Northeastern State 3:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Jan. 2 vs. Rogers State 7:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena
Jan. 7 vs. Missouri Western 3:30 p.m. in Bearcat Arena

GRAPHIC BY SAVANNAH ATHY-SEDBROOK DESIGNER

MIAA
CONTINUED FROM A8

Perhaps the biggest reason thus far for Northwest's success has been the team's efficiency shooting the ball. The Bearcats are No. 1 in Division II in field goal percentage, making 57.3% of all of their shots. Even from 3-point range, they are 44.4% from deep which is good enough to be the No. 3 team in Division II for 3-point shooting percentage.

Part of the efficiency has come from Mascari's success. Mascari is No. 9 in 3-point percentage, making 53.1% of his shots from beyond the arc. In the first game of the season in a 78-62 win over No. 5 West Texas A&M Nov. 5, he scored a career-high 18 points. Just three weeks later, he surpassed that mark with a new career-high of 25 points against the Mustangs.

"I think having experience and having that confidence like, 'OK, I can really impact this game,' always helps you out when you

walk on the floor," Mascari said.

McCollum said it's going to be exciting to get the conference schedule underway and to match up with the Bearcats' rivals. They have won 11 straight conference-opener games.

"I think our kids get really excited for conference play," McCollum said. "There needs to be a heightened level of awareness, and there'll be a lot more energy in the game. ... Any of our MIAA games are exciting, and we're excited for the opportunity."

CONFERENCE CONTINUED FROM A8

Northwest will begin conference play this week traveling to Joplin, Missouri, Dec. 1 to take on No. 5 Missouri Southern (7-0). The Bearcats and the Lions split the season series a year ago with the home team winning both battles. Southern had the upper hand for its season success, winning a share of the MIAA regular season title.

Both Atwood and Hartnett said they feel like they aren't underdogs, no matter the ranking of the team they are facing.

"They bring a lot of talent back," Atwood said of the Lions. "The last few years we've matched up well with them, beat them here last year and then lost there. So, I think we know when we're playing focused and playing tough that we have a lot of potential."

"Yeah, I think we match up well with them," Hartnett said. "I think overall, our depth is good, we have a lot more contributors. So, that'll be nice having our bench involved. But, they are a really good team, and it'll take every minute of the game to stay focused and get that win."

The Bearcats will also head to Pitt State Dec. 3 to take on the Gorillas (5-1). The two teams split the season series during the 2021-22 season, which ended a 17-game losing streak to the Gorillas for the Bearcats.

Pittsburg's fifth year senior guard Tristan Gegg will be the focal point of the Gorillas' offense. Meyer said they will need to be well prepared on the defensive side of the ball to have a successful night against Pitt State.

"Tristan Gegg averaged 20 a game last year, and she's shooting 45% from three," Meyer said. "They have some younger kids that are playing well too. You just have to be really solid defensively against them."

Following the game against Pitt State, Northwest will have the week off before returning to Bearcat Arena to play the University of Nebraska-Kearney Dec. 10 — the team that brought an end to the Bearcats' 2021-22 campaign in the first round of the MIAA Tournament.

OFFSEASON CONTINUED FROM A8

After that loss, the Bearcats went on an 11-match win streak to end the regular season, helping the 'Cats claim their first-ever outright MIAA regular season title.


"It felt really good to beat at least all of the MIAA teams once this season and many of them twice," Kirchhoefer said. "This team is such a special bunch, and we got to make history together by winning a regular season conference championship."

Northwest started its postseason journey with the MIAA Tournament. Northwest was the No. 1 seed in the MIAA Conference Tournament and faced No. 8 Missouri Southern in the first round Nov. 10. The Bearcats swept the Lions to move onto the second round against No. 5 seed Washburn. However, the win over Southern was ultimately Northwest's last of the 2022 season.

The Ichabods, the eventual tournament champions, defeated the 'Cats 3-1 in a closely contested match. Northwest ended the conference tournament with an overall record of 24-6, which propelled the Bearcats to their second straight NCAA Tournament appearance. The 'Cats earned the No. 4 seed in the Central Region. That's where their season ended, though, as their first-round foe St. Cloud State beat Northwest 3-1, the Bearcats ended with a record of 24-7.

Even with the quick end to the team's campaign, Kirchhoefer said she is proud of everyone's efforts throughout the season. She said the team will be ready for next season.

"It was such an amazing feeling and experience getting to go to regionals again this year," Kirchhoefer said. "This team and program are definitely continuing to improve over the years. Making it to regionals back-to-back years truly shows the strength and growth of this program over the past few years. We are going to continue to grow and learn from our experiences and next year we will hopefully make regionals again."




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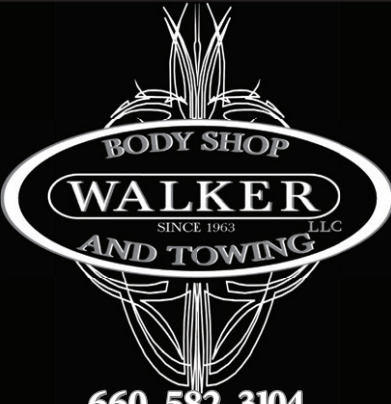
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NATHAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER
Worth County High School football players stand on the sidelines watching their teammates play. The Tigers played in the 8-Man State Quarterfinals against North Andrew Nov. 18 and lost 38-40.

Rural high school programs see decrease in participation

WESLEY MILLER
Sports Editor | @wesleymiller360

A cloud of dust combined from the gravel roads and the crops nearby disperse to reveal a red-brick building. The structure is seemingly out-of-place with the rest of the area mainly being used as farmland. Just before the 320th Street intersection on the west side of U.S. Highway 136 in Nodaway County, sits Jefferson Conception High School.

The 3:02 p.m. bell inside serves as the signal to go home for most, to Johnnie Silkett it signals for him to get ready to head to Barnard, Missouri, where he puts aside his lesson plans in exchange for a whistle and playbook for the past two years.

“We were on the verge of collapsing our football program about four or five years ago,” Silkett said. “I still think the value of what our kids are getting out of it right now is really good.”

Before 2021, Silkett was the South Nodaway superintendent and the junior high football coach for Platte Valley — a combination between Jefferson Conception and South Nodaway since 2016. Between the spring and fall of 2021, Silkett made the switch from South Nodaway to Jefferson Conception and became the varsity football coach for Platte Valley. At the same time, North Nodaway was added to the pairing.

Nearly 161 miles away from Nodaway County, a football field lies empty. Its ground is still attempting to grow back grass from the years of use. The indentations in the ground where players used to run are still visible. On the northwest and southeast sides of the green and brown field sit groups of bleachers. The bleachers remain, but the fans who used to occupy them on Friday nights do not. There’s no need to.

This field, like its school, sits on the north side of Chilhowee, Missouri. Chilhowee was able to field an eight-man football team, partly due to a partnership with Leeton High School 12 minutes east, from 2009-18. However, after the 2018 season, the football program was forced to fold.

Athletic Director Randy Buss, who has been at the position for four years, said the numbers were always low, and Chilhowee didn’t get the best athletes out for football due to them focusing on other sports.

“I think the community was let down,” Buss said. “You know, we set up a field, we bought these real nice aluminum bleachers and put up a crowd’s nest. So when that disappears, you look out there and see your football field with nothing going on. It is a little weird.”

In the past 34 years, the number of eight-man teams in Missouri has grown from 15 in 1988

I can’t imagine giving the news to an entire team full of kids that they’re not gonna play anymore.

-CHUCK DAVIS

to 42 at the end of 2022. Some of these teams have also combined over the years.

Besides all playing eight-man, there is another thing all 42 teams have in common — a ninth through 11th grade enrollment of less than 140 students, even with some of the teams’ enrollment numbers being combined between multiple schools.

Just as the Ozark Mountains begin to cover the Missouri skyline, 47 miles away from Springfield, Missouri, Lockwood coach Clay Lasater has his players run drills. In three years’ time, they’ve figured out how the eight-man system works. Lasater said it was hard for the players and the fans to get used to the new style.

“When you’re making a change to go eight-man, for some people it feels like a game they’ve never played, maybe never even watched,” Lasater said. “It’s still hitting, blocking, tackling and there’s just three less guys out there, but it’s still football.”

The eight-man team with the highest enrollment is just a little bit over 40 minutes south of Maryville on Highway 71. Bishop LeBlond stands at the top with an enrollment of 139 students from freshmen to juniors.

Just five years ago, this team would’ve been nearing the end of an 11-man season. However, LeBlond coach Chuck Davis said the administration looked at the enrollment numbers and decided it was best to move down to eight-man.

“It was really just like starting totally from scratch,” Davis said of the transition. “I think it was good for the players to be underdogs. While I was a little sad that we went to eight-man, I think it was the best thing to happen to our football program.”

Between 2010-20, the rural areas of the country saw a population decrease of roughly 289,000 out of 46 million. It was the first time in recorded history that there was a decade-long population decrease. In a state where 97.4% of the land is classified as rural, 78 of the 114 counties

(68%) in Missouri saw a population decrease in the 2020 census. In Nodaway County alone, from 2010-21, the population dropped from 23,402 to 21,160 people.

“I can’t really tell what it’s gonna be like 10 years from now, but most likely we’ll continue to have lower and lower populations,” Silkett said.

“I think that’s something you’re gonna continue to see, even with bigger schools, and having to go to eight-man or face smaller numbers,” Lasater said.

Reasons for the decline of football participation are limitless. It could be due to the concern that football is too dangerous, especially with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) being learned about more and more. CTE is a brain condition that progresses from repeated blows to the head and concussions.

With the Missouri eight-man State Championship set between Bishop LeBlond and North Andrew Dec. 1, these issues have already affected a few schools before the end of the 2022 season. Knox County High School was forced to forfeit its first postseason game and the rest of its season due to lack of players. Additionally, two schools have joined the ranks of eight-man football in Princeton High School and Paris High School.

Davis said whether they’re near the Nodaway County border, at the Lake of the Ozarks or in St. Joseph, like his team, the experiences made on the gridiron are priceless.

“Let’s be honest, high school football kind of sucks six days of the week, then it’s really exciting on Friday night,” Davis said. “I can’t imagine giving the news to an entire team full of kids that they’re not gonna play anymore. Very few things build camaraderie like going through tough times with your friends, and I think every kid deserves an opportunity to feel what it feels like.”



WESLEY MILLER SPORTS EDITOR
Bishop LeBlond football players walk down their sideline during a 80-18 win over Nodaway Valley Oct. 7. The Golden Eagles will play North Andrew in the state championship Dec. 1. They have the highest enrollment between ninth and 11th grade for the 2022-23 academic year with 139 students.



NATHAN SMITH PHOTOGRAPHER
North Andrew and Worth County football players face off at the 8-Man State Quarterfinals at North Andrew High School Nov. 18. The Cardinals beat the Tigers 40-38 moving North Andrew to the 8-Man State Semifinals.

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Holiday season

A schedule of games to come during the winter break for Northwest basketball. see A6

SPORTS

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The Fall of Football
Across Missouri, high schools see drop in football participation. see A7



WESLEY MILLER SPORTS EDITOR
Northwest men's basketball senior guard Diego Bernard goes for a layup against Truman State Nov. 20. Bernard recorded 14 points in the 92-47 win.

Bearcats to begin conference play

WESLEY MILLER
Sports Editor | @wesleymiller360

Riding on a bus can give people time to think, play on their phone or even work on homework during a trip. The same goes for players when traveling to and from away games.

The No. 1 team in Division II and three-time defending champions, Northwest men's basketball, will have a couple chances to experience the benefits of a bus ride as the team prepares for the start of the conference schedule. Sophomore guard Mitch Mascari said he's ready.

"It's always exciting playing rivals," Mascari said. "We're all excited."

For Mascari, when the Bearcats go Dec. 1 to Joplin, Missouri, it will be his first time playing at Missouri Southern. He said he's going to enjoy both trips, as it's an opportunity for multiple things.

"Some people like to sleep on the bus, some people do homework, so it really just depends on the type of player you are," Mascari said. "I usu-

ally nap for a little bit then work on homework."

Mascari will be able to continue his routine when the Bearcats travel Dec. 1 to Joplin, Missouri, to play Missouri Southern, then Dec. 3 to Pittsburg, Kansas, to match up with Pittsburg State.

The Bearcats (6-0) have been successful against the Lions (4-2) and Gorillas (3-3) in recent years. Northwest has defeated Southern nine straight times and has won over Pittsburg in 14 consecutive games.

However, both squads have a different look than previous games. The Lions are playing under first-year coach Sam McMahon. Southern's previous coach, Jeff Boschee, moved almost 40 minutes north and across the Missouri-Kansas border to take over the reins of the Pittsburg program.

Northwest coach Ben McCollum said scouting is key in preparing to play a new face, but he also knows what to expect from a Boschee-coached team after he was the Lions' coach for eight seasons.

"If they're like Boschee's old teams, they're

gonna compete, they're gonna score and they're gonna play fast," McCollum said before changing his focus to Southern. "I think we'll have a good scout on them and hopefully we can figure out what they're doing defensively."

When the team hops on the bus for its journeys, Northwest will be looking to build off its hot start. After six games, the Bearcats are a perfect 6-0. Three of their contests have been against teams with winning records.

Over the Thanksgiving week, the 'Cats won 92-47 over Truman State in the home-opener Nov. 20 and triumphed in 82-58 fashion over Morningside Nov. 26. Northwest has not lost since Feb. 21 and have won 17 consecutive games — the longest active streak among Division I and II.

"It probably all goes back to we have to be at an elite level energy-wise and toughness-wise every day in practice so it carries over to games to create that habit of being ready consistently," McCollum said.

SEE MIAA | A6



TYSON ELLIOTT PHOTOGRAPHER
Northwest sophomore guard Evelyn Vazquez dribbles down to Doane's side of the court during the Nov. 1 exhibition match at Bearcat Arena.

Women's basketball to start two-game road trip against pair of conference opponents

TYLER PETERSEN
Missourian Reporter | @NWMSports

Northwest women's basketball posted a 75-61 win at home against Peru State Nov. 27 as the team looks ahead to the start of MIAA play.

The Bearcats improved to 4-1 after the win against the Bobcats with help from sophomore forward Emma Atwood, returning after an ACL injury from the year prior. Coach Austin Meyer said her return helped propel them forward to victory.

"She's efficient offensively, she rebounds, she's tough and she's one of our best defenders,

so that helps us out tremendously," Meyer said.

Atwood scored 12 points off the bench, shooting at an 80% clip. Sophomore guard Molly Hartnett was the only player for the Bearcats who surpassed Atwood in scoring with 14 points.

"Going into this game, we made sure no matter what division we're playing, we don't want to overlook them because they're just as good as anyone else," Atwood said. "We had a breakdown there in the third quarter defensively, so we do have some areas to improve on."

SEE CONFERENCE | A6

Northwest volleyball looks toward long offseason, future campaigns

RIVER BOYD
Sports Reporter | @RiverBoyd5

Northwest volleyball ended its historic season with a heartbreaking 3-1 loss to St. Cloud State Nov. 18 in Wayne, Nebraska. This was the first-round matchup in the NCAA Central Region Tournament for the Bearcats, who head into the offseason on the heels of another successful season.

The Bearcats' 2022 season started Aug. 26-27 in Canyon, Texas, for the Britkare Lady Buff Classic. In this tournament, Northwest faced four teams it had never played before in program history. The Bearcats won all four matches and claimed first place in the tournament.

Northwest sophomore outside hitter Payton Kirchhoefer led the 'Cats with 18 kills in a 3-1 win over West Texas A&M in the final game of the tournament. She finished the season as the team leader in kills with 369, and she claimed her second straight American Volleyball Coaches Association all-region honors.

"Starting off playing hard teams right away definitely played a major role in shaping our season," Kirchhoefer said. "This helped us know what was coming for the rest of the season right away. The beginning tournaments overall helped us grow as a team."

The Bearcats hit the road again

Sept. 2-3 for the Premier Challenge in Denver, Colorado. Once again, Northwest faced teams that it had never seen before. On the first day of the tournament, the Bearcats swept Angelo State then lost 3-1 to Metropolitan State University of Denver.

On day two, the 'Cats defeated Western Washington 3-1 to earn a chance to play for the silver bracket championship against Regis Sept. 3. Northwest fell short against the Rangers 3-2 to earn second place in the silver bracket.

Junior right side Jaden Ferguson said the Britkare Lady Buff Classic helped build up confidence heading into the Premier Challenge, and the Premier Challenge helped the Bearcats learn and grow from their mistakes. Ferguson was second on the team for the season in kills with 331 and earned her first AVCA all-region selection.

"Playing in Colorado was definitely a challenge for us, but it kind of helped us recognize what we needed to work on early in the season rather than at mid-season," Ferguson said.

The season didn't get any easier as Northwest kicked off MIAA play against Central Missouri, and the Bearcats dropped the five-set thriller to start MIAA play 0-1.

The loss to the Jennies seemingly woke up Northwest, as the team went on a five-match



TYSON ELLIOTT PHOTOGRAPHER
Sophomore middle hitter Abby Brunssen and junior right side hitter Jaden Ferguson jump for a block resulting in a Northwest point in the 3-1 loss to Washburn in the MIAA Tournament Nov. 11.

winning streak. The good times were not to last, though, as the Bearcats were swept by then-No. 6 Nebraska-Kearney Sept. 30 in Kearney, Nebraska.

The 'Cats were swept once again in their third MIAA match against then-No. 24 Central Oklahoma Oct. 7 in Edmond, Oklahoma. If the loss to Central Missouri didn't get the team going, the loss to the Bronchos did because Northwest won the rest of its regular season matches.

SEE OFFSEASON | A6



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